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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH HANOI PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

1. (U) Summary: In a February 18 meeting with the Ambassador, Hanoi City People's Committee Chairman Nguyen Quoc Trieu described the city's many priorities and development plans and noted that the city will celebrate its 1000th anniversary in 2010. The Ambassador described lapses in intellectual property rights (IPR) protection in Hanoi and concerns about the failure of Government officials to live up to contractual agreements, highlighting the Tricore Third Ring Road project as an example of this. The Ambassador also raised the difficulties the Protestant Church in Hanoi is having receiving authority to make improvements to its property. Chairman Trieu proclaimed Hanoi has been successful in countering avian influenza. End Summary.

2. (U) The Ambassador began the February 18 meeting by remarking on the difficulties the city is facing in handling its rapid growth and economic development. Chairman Trieu described a number of the city's priorities, including maintaining friendly relations with other countries; ensuring the "spiritual and material lives" of residents are cared for; encouraging tourism; preventing "social evils" and maintaining order; developing the city's public infrastructure, including constructing three new bridges across the Red River; and attracting foreign investors. Trieu has received an invitation to visit California in his official capacity, but wants to invite the governor of California to visit Hanoi first. Hanoi will celebrate its 1000th anniversary in 2010, Trieu noted proudly.

3. (U) The Ambassador agreed that Hanoi has a good image internationally and is well positioned to receive foreign investment. Commercial interaction has increased rapidly, though investment from the United States lags. One concern of American investors is IPR protection; counterfeit and pirated goods are easily available in Hanoi. The Ambassador reminded Trieu that right now they could purchase pirated DVD'S and other goods at shops within minutes of City Hall. Better measures to protect IPR would make Hanoi more competitive in attracting investment. Developing a good transportation infrastructure is also important. Investors must have confidence that agreements they make in Vietnam will be upheld. One American company - Tricore - made an agreement with the national Government to construct a ring road around Hanoi five years ago, but the Government has not lived up to this promise. Land right issues are also difficult. The city must balance the residential requirements of Hanoians with the need of investors to be able to acquire land for development. The land law passed in 2004 will hopefully diminish the many problems in this area. Obtaining clear title to land can also be difficult. For example, the Protestant Church has occupied the same land in Hanoi since 1918, but cannot obtain title from the city in order to make improvements to its property. Finally, addressing security concerns, the Ambassador agreed that Hanoi is a safe city, but stressed the Embassy must take significant preventative security measures nonetheless. The ultimate solution to the Embassy's security problem is relocation to a new compound. In the interim, we are working with authorities to find a way to make our security barriers more aesthetically pleasing.

4. (U) Chairman Trieu noted that this was the first time he had heard of the Tricore dispute. The Hanoi ring road, as well as the three bridges over the Red River, are controlled by the Ministry of Transportation, not the city. Further administrative reforms will help solve some of the problems foreign investors face. The land law has only been in place since July, and more time is required before it can be fully implemented. Responding to the Ambassador's inquiry about avian influenza, Trieu said that the city's measures to halt the disease are "our pride," and that Prime Minister Khai had suggested that Chairman Trieu share Hanoi's experiences with other provinces so that its model could be copied.

5. (U) Biographic Note: Hanoi People's Committee Chairman Dr. Nguyen Quoc Trieu was born June 22, 1951, in Bac Ninh Province. He received a medical degree in 1976, and taught at medical school until 1981. Trieu studied "youth mobilization" in East Germany in 1981-82, and completed a PhD in public health after studying in Moscow and Hanoi from 1987 to 1994. He was director of the Hanoi Department of Health from 1994 to 1999, Vice Chairman of the People's

Committee from 1999 to 2004, and Chairman since May 2004.
He clearly understands some English, but prefers to conduct
meetings in Vietnamese. End Biographic Note.
MARINE